



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
FEBRUARY 14, 2007

CITY FACILITIES NOW EQUIPPED WITH PUBLIC ACCESS DEFIBRILLATORS

MEDICINE HAT - The City of Medicine Hat and Palliser Health Region EMS today have taken steps to increase residents' chances of surviving a sudden cardiac arrest.

Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) are now available for public use in the following City facilities:

- Veiner Centre
- Strathcona Centre
- The Arena
- Moose Recreation Centre
- Hockey Hounds Recreation Centre
- Outdoor Pools
- Kinplex/Heald Pool
- Family Leisure Centre
- Crestwood Recreation Centre
- Transit Terminal
- Esplanade Arts and Heritage Centre
- City Hall

"Having the AEDs in our facilities increases access to early defibrillation and helps to save lives," says Judi Frank, Manager of Aquatic Services.

Every year, sudden cardiac arrest claims the lives of at least 35,000 people in Canada. The only known treatment for sudden cardiac arrest is the use of a defibrillator, which uses a powerful electric shock to stop the abnormal heart rhythm and allow the heart to return to a more normal beating pattern. Survival rates for sudden cardiac arrest are less than two per cent when defibrillation is delayed 10 minutes or more.

"This initiative will make our recreation centres and community facilities even more safe by providing an opportunity for someone in need to receive this life-saving treatment as quickly as possible," says Paul Blasetti, Paramedic Team Leader with Palliser Health Region EMS.

Unlike models of defibrillators intended for use by health care professionals, AEDs do not require extensive medical knowledge to understand or operate. The expertise needed to analyze the heart's electrical function is programmed into the device and enables people to provide treatment to victims of SCA.

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For further information, please contact:

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PUBLIC ACCESS DEFIBRILLATION FACT SHEET

It is estimated that there are over 70,000 heart attacks in Canada each year. More than 35,000 to 40,000 Canadian lives are lost each year due to cardiac arrest. Public Access Defibrillation can bring the lifesaving shock of a defibrillator to a person experiencing cardiac arrest within minutes – even before emergency services personnel can arrive. Time is of the essence for those suffering cardiac arrest.

Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) are now located in the following City facilities:

- Veiner Centre
- Strathcona Centre
- The Arena
- Hockey Hounds Recreation Centre
- Moose Recreation Centre
- Kinkplex
- Family Leisure Centre
- Crestwood Recreation Centre
- Transit Terminal
- Espanade Arts and Heritage Centre
- City Hall
- Outdoor Pools

The facilities chosen have a high number of spectators, visitors and participants, provide access to recreational activities, and serve individuals potentially at higher risk for Sudden Cardiac Arrest.



AEDs are safe, easy to use, and can be used effectively by trained medical and non medical individuals.

An AED assesses a person's heart rhythm and then, if required, delivers an electric shock to restore a normal rhythm. Survival rates when defibrillation is administered within the first few minutes after a cardiac arrest may be as high as 75%. With each passing minute from the time of arrest, the probability of survival declines about 7% to 10%.

Public Access Defibrillation trials have reinforced the importance of planned and practiced response to cardiac emergencies by lay rescuers. The Public Access Defibrillation trial demonstrated a doubling of survival rates (from 15% to 30%).

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Medicine Hat
The Gas City



New guidelines have recently been established regarding the use of AEDs, incorporating AED training for all levels of first aid and Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation. The use of AEDs is deregulated medical act in the province of Alberta; therefore individuals who use an AED will be covered under the Emergency Medical Aid Act.